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Benny Kuriakose

In his quest as a creative person, Benny Kuriakose has travelled diverse paths and translated the philosophy of his mentor Laurie Baker many times over. His approach to a design is characterised by fluid and ever-changing reflections that follow the universal dynamics of the hermeneutical circle. To Kuriakose, architecture is a profession where one can do quality work and others can appreciate this fact. He feels that although you might be doing a particular type of building, each time you can do it in a completely different way. "This is a profession where creativity, truthfulness, sincerity and commitment can produce first class work," he says. In architecture you can change your thrust every few years and not get bored he feels. "I shifted from low-cost construction to vernacular architecture to disaster rehabilitation housing to academics to conservation, green living etc. It is not possible to do like this in many other fields," he explains. He feels that in architecture limitations and drawbacks can produce extraordinary results by turning them around a bit. "Design can change the quality of life of other people and society can benefit from your design. There can be times when the users may think of the designer who has created the product," he says.

Kuriakose admires the work of Laurie Baker, Hassan Fathy, Geoffrey Bawa, Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Peter Zumthor. Some of his favourite materials are timber, natural stone, fired clay bricks and tiles, earth, concrete and glass.

Kuriakose started his career with basic lessons in architecture under the tutelage of Laurie Baker. The Charles Wallace India Trust Award in 1986 took him to the University of York, UK, to do an MA in Conservation Studies and he obtained his doctorate from IIT, Madras. His approach to architecture can be seen in the range of his work : in individual houses, resorts and institutional projects, in the Dakshinachitra project in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, in the rehabilitation of disaster affected sites at Nagapattinam, Bhuj or Lattur and in the Heritage Project at Muziris in Kerala.